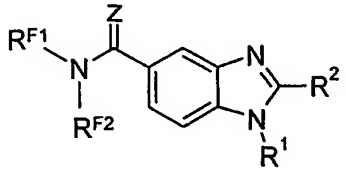
What is claimed is:

1. A compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



I

wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently C_{1-6}alkyl substituted by one or more groups selected from -F, -Cl, -Br, $-NO_2$, -CN, -OH, -CHO, -C(=O)-R' and -OR', wherein R' is a C_{1-3}alkyl;

Z is selected from O= and S=;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, R^3R^4N-C_{1-6}alkyl, R^3O-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^3R^4NS(=O)_2$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^3CS(=O)_2N(-R^4)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^3R^4NC(=O)N(-R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^3R^4NS(=O)_2N(R^5)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl, R^3R^4N-, R^3O-, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-, $R^3R^4NS(=O)_2$-, $R^3CS(=O)_2N(-R^4)$-, $R^3R^4NC(=O)N(-R^5)$-, $R^3R^4NS(=O)_2N(R^5)$-, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-C(=O)-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-; wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-C(=O)-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl or C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)- used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and R^3R^4N-;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, R^3R^4N-, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, C_{6-10}aryl and C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, C_{6-10}aryl or C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and R^3R^4N-; and

R^3 and R^4 and are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, and a divalent C_{1-6} group that together with another divalent C_{1-6}group selected from R^3 and R^4 forms a portion of a ring.

2. A compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently selected from $-CF_3$, $-CH_2CF_3$, $-CH_2CHF_2$, $-CHFCF_3$, $-CHFCHF_2$, $-CHFCH_2F$, $-CF_2CF_3$, $-CF_2CH_3$, $-CF_2CH_2F$, $-CF_2CHF_2$, $-CF_3$, $-CH_2CCl_3$, $-CH_2CHCl_2$, $-CH_2CBr_3$, $-CH_2CHBr_2$, $-CH_2NO_2$, $-CH_2CH_2NO_2$, $-CH_2CN$, $-CH_2CH_2CN$, and $-CH_2CH_2OCH_3$;

Z is O=;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, R^3R^4N-C_{1-4}alkyl, R^3O-C_{1-4}alkyl, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, R^3R^4N-, R^3O-, $R^3R^4NS(=O)_2$-, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-C(=O)-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-; wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-C(=O)-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl or C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)- used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and R^3R^4N-;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, R^3R^4N-, phenyl and C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, phenyl or C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and R^3R^4N-; and

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl and C_{2-6}alkenyl.

3. A compound as claimed claim 1, wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently selected from $-CF_3$, $-CH_2CF_3$, $-CH_2CHF_2$, $-CHFCF_3$, $-CHFCHF_2$, $-CHFCH_2F$, $-CF_2CF_3$, $-CF_2CH_3$, $-CF_2CH_2F$, $-CF_2CHF_2$, and $-CF_3$;

Z is O=;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, R^3R^4N-, R^3R^4N-C_{1-4}alkyl, R^3O-C_{1-4}alkyl, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-; wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, R^3R^4N-C_{1-4}alkyl, R^3O-C_{1-4}alkyl, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl or C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C(=O)- used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and R^3R^4N-;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, R^3R^4N-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, and phenyl wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, and phenyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and R^3R^4N-; and

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl and C_{2-6}alkenyl.

4. A compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are $-CH_2CF_3$;

Z is O=;

R^1 is selected from cyclohexylmethyl, cyclopentylmethyl, cyclobutylmethyl, cyclopropylmethyl, ethyl, propyl, adamantyl, adamantylmethyl, allyl, isopentyl, benzyl, methoxyethyl, tetrahydropyranylmethyl, tetrahydrofuranylmethyl, cyclohexyloxy, cyclohexylamino, dimethylaminoethyl, 4-pyridylmethyl, 2-pyridylmethyl, 1-pyrrolylethyl, 1-morpholinoethyl, 4,4-difluorocyclohexylmethyl, cyclohexylmethyl, 2-pyrrolidylmethyl, N-methyl-2-pyrrolidylmethyl, 2-piperidylmethyl, N-methyl-2-piperidylmethyl, 3-thienylmethyl, (2-nitrothiophene-5-yl)-methyl, (1-methyl-1H-imidazole-2-yl)methyl, (5-(acetoxymethyl)-2-furyl)methyl), (2,3-dihydro-1H-isoindole-1-yl)methyl, and 5-(2-methylthiazolyl); and

R^2 is selected from t-butyl, n-butyl, 2-methyl-2-butyl, cyclohexyl, cyclohexylmethyl, n-pentyl, isopentyl, trifluoromethyl, 1,1-difluoroethyl, N-piperidyl, dimethylamino, phenyl, pyridyl, tetrahydrofuranyl, tetrahydropyranyl, 2-methoxy-2-propyl, and N-morpholinyl.

5. A compound selected from 2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-*N*,*N*-bis(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazole-5-carboxamide and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

6. A compound according to any one of claims 1-5 for use as a medicament.

7. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the therapy of pain.

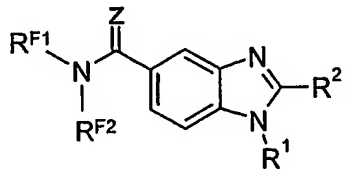
8. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of anxiety disorders.

9. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of cancer, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's chorea, Alzheimer's disease, gastrointestinal disorders and cardiavascular disorders..

10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

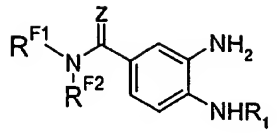
11. A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5.

12. A method for preparing a compound of formula I,



I

comprising the step of reacting a compound of formula II,



II

with a compound of $R^2C(=O)$-X to form the compound of formula I,

wherein

R^{F1} and R^{F2} are independently selected from $-CF_3$, $-CH_2CF_3$, $-CH_2CHF_2$, $-CHFCF_3$, $-CHFCHF_2$, $-CHFCH_2F$, $-CF_2CF_3$, $-CF_2CH_3$, $-CF_2CH_2F$, $-CF_2CHF_2$, and $-CF_3$;

Z is selected from O= and S=;

X is selected from -Cl, -Br, -I, -OH, $-OCH_3$, and $-OCH_2CH_3$;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, R^3R^4N-C_{1-4}alkyl, R^3O-C_{1-4}alkyl, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-; wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, R^3R^4N-C_{1-4}alkyl, R^3O-C_{1-4}alkyl, $R^3C(=O)N(-R^4)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl or C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$- used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and R^3R^4N-;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, R^3R^4N-, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, and phenyl wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, and phenyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and amino; and

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from -H, C_{1-6}alkyl and C_{2-6}alkenyl.